

CONFIRMATION SPONSOR QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES

Ordinarily there should be a sponsor for each of those to be confirmed. The sponsor brings the candidate to receive the sacrament, presents him or her to the minister for the anointing, and will later help him/her to fulfill the promises made at baptism faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

In view of pastoral circumstances, it is desirable that the godparent at baptism, if present, also be the sponsor at Confirmation. This change expresses more clearly the relationship between baptism and Confirmation and also makes the function and responsibility of the sponsor more effective.

A. Qualifications of the Sponsor

- The sponsor must be sufficiently mature for the role and at least 16 years of age.
- The sponsor must be a member of the Catholic Church and initiated in the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- The sponsor need not be the same sex as the candidate.
- The sponsor must not be prohibited by law from exercising this role.
- Godparents at Baptism may be the sponsors at Confirmation thus emphasizing the integral relationship between the two sacraments.
- The sponsor reflects Catholic Christian values in word, worship, and service.
- As teacher, the sponsor will communicate his or her own experiences of the Catholic Christian life by sharing the story of faith, both from a personal perspective and the perspective of the Church.
- The sponsor must be someone with whom the candidate can relate and have actual contact during the period of preparation.
- It is recommended that the sponsor not be a parent

B. Responsibilities of the Sponsor

- Attendance at formational meetings for sponsors.
- Commitment of personal time to the candidate throughout the entire period of preparation, such as classes, the celebration of the liturgical rites, etc.
- Continual renewal of his or her own spiritual life during the process of preparation.
- Pray for the candidate.
- Willingness to give time to the candidate even after the celebration of Confirmation.

C. Characteristics of the Sponsor

- A sponsor must be a praying person. Growth in prayer is often helped by looking into sources of prayer: a) the sacred liturgy, b) the scriptures, c) private or group prayer, as well as d) shared prayer of sponsor and candidate.
- A sponsor must be a listening person. We have to learn how to listen well to the stories of others. For some people, it takes a long time before they feel comfortable enough to share openly their thoughts, feelings, and personal histories. A good listener is present to the speaker and gives him/her the undivided attention.
- A sponsor respects the candidate. The love and respect will allow the candidate to feel comfortable and trusting enough to communicate with his/her sponsor.
- As a sponsor you have the responsibility of acquainting candidates with some of the people in your parish community. Once the candidate is better acquainted with the Catholic family and its traditions, they will be better prepared to make a deeper commitment to their faith.
- One of the most valuable traits in a sponsor is the ability to allow the candidate to be free. The sponsor should be a freeing person who allows the candidate to choose whether he/she is ready to be a Confirmed Catholic or he/she needs more time make the decision.